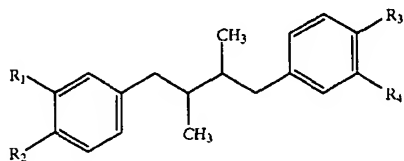


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What is claimed is:

1. A method for suppressing viral growth in a host which consists essentially of administering to the host an effective viral growth suppressing amount of a composition consisting essentially of a compound of the formula:



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3. The method of claim 1 for suppressing Herpes simplex virus in the host.

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wherein  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  are each selected from the group consisting of  $\text{HO—}$ ,  $\text{CH}_2\text{O—}$  and  $\text{CH}_2(\text{C=O})\text{O—}$ , provided that  $R_1$ ,  $R_2$ ,  $R_3$  and  $R_4$  are not each  $\text{HO—}$ .

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said compound is water-soluble.